

## **BILL MCQUAID – *PASSING IT ON***

Bill McQuaid is a Cambridge, Massachusetts based country blues performer who plays songs primarily from the 1920s and 1930s on a 1931 National Steel guitar. Bill has studied country blues with Paul Rishell, Bertrand Laurence, Scott Ainslie, and Robert Jones. In addition to playing music, Bill has worked on the other side of the glass as a recording engineer and as a producer.

**1. DEPOT** – This Son House song is more of a jam than the original version, but it's in the spirit of many Son House field recordings. Jim Fitting plays harmonica and Steve Sadler plays mandolin. A song about lost love, Son moans that his woman is hanging craper on his door. Craper is a funeral wreath and symbolizes the death of the relationship.

**2. ONE DIME** – A fusion of Blind Lemon Jefferson's version and Willie McTell's. Steve Sadler plays the 12-string like Willie, and I play Lemon's part. Jim Fitting adds harp and Paul Kochanski is on upright bass. I love the line "Get two six shooters, *highway* some passenger train." What a great verb.

**3. SUNDAY STREET** – A modern Dave Van Ronk song. Dave is one of the most influential blues revivalists, and I had the pleasure of seeing him play a number of times. This is my tribute to Dave.

**4. ILLINOIS** – Skip James' approach to performing music sets him apart from other bluesmen. This song features a rarely used open minor tuning. I tuned the guitar way down, and Steve and Jim joined me in an unstructured jam. We amplified my National into a B3 organ Leslie speaker to give the song a little extra ju-ju – deep, dark and chunky.

**5. STATESBORO BLUES** – This song is probably the most well known song on the CD, thanks to the Allman Brothers. This take starts a little slower than Willie McTell's original version and then builds up steam. Steve Sadler plays mandola, adding a part that is a cross between the Batman theme and something that Howard (Louie Bluey) Armstrong might have played.

**6. KIND HEARTED WOMAN** – Written by Robert Johnson, this is the closest Chicago-style recording on the CD. The guitar and harp are amped, and man, does Jim Fitting nail this one. If you listen closely to the harp solo, you'll hear a man getting beaten up by a woman who "studies evil all the time."

**7. YOYO BLUES** – Written by Robert Hicks, a.k.a. Barbecue Bob, this is the only bottleneck slide song on the CD. The first recording I heard of Yoyo was by Paul Rishell. Recorded late one night when my voice was just about shot, we slowed the song down, added Paul on bass and Jim glued it together with his harp and a couple hollers.

**8. BYE BYE BLUES** – True to Tommy Johnson's version, Steve plays the Charley McCoy part on an old National Duolian. It felt like Charley was in the room with me as Steve mixed high tremolo and major pentatonic riffs inside Tommy's minor pentatonic riffs that I played.

**9. I GET THE BLUES** – A Bo Carter song arranged for string band with Steve Sadler playing mandolin on one side and mandola on the other, and Paul Kochanski on upright bass. My producer, Frank Coakley, asked Howard Armstrong to play on this track, but regrettably, Louie Bluey passed away before we could have him in the studio.

**10. FRANKIE AND ALBERT** – A Mississippi John Hurt arrangement performed as a duo with Steve Sadler on Dobro. The story is about Frankie catching her man Albert having an affair with a woman named "Alice Pry." She ends up killing Albert and getting acquitted by a sympathetic judge.

**11. GREEN ROCKY ROAD** – Adapted from the Dave Van Ronk version. The song was collected from the children of the Lilly Chapel School in York, Alabama and is found in *Negro Songs From Alabama* by Harold Courlander.

**12. CANDYMAN** – Not to be confused with Sammy Davis Jr.'s version, this is another John Hurt song and it's pure double entendre. The candy stick was sold as an elixir and was made of corn syrup – it could be laced with cocaine. The candy man is selling candy to women and, as the line indicates, "you sure will want it for a long, long time."

**13. BIG ROAD** – Written by Tommy Johnson, this is one of my favorite show closers. Johnny Mac joins me on harmonica on this version. As the lyrics "Ain't going down that big road by myself" suggest, it's all about sharing the blues.